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FDA Asks Big Pharma to Mooooove Out (/full-blog/2014/01/fda-asks-big-pharma-to-mooooove-out.html)



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Image Source (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/dist/eastern/images/cows-feeding-med.jpg>)

By: Marc Manley, Staff Member

After an intense finals week diet of Red Bull and granola bars, one of my favorite holiday past times is tearing into a plump, moist turkey. I swear, each year the bird looks bigger, but that could be the sleep deprivation talking. This year, with the holiday feast looming, I was surprised to discover my favorite tradition was supplying me with more than just a full belly and refreshing nap. This past December, the FDA introduced a new policy aimed at curbing widespread antibiotic use in livestock production.^[i]

(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn1) It seems farmers have stumbled across an unanswered secret regarding antibiotic use: it makes my holiday turkey fatter.^[ii]

(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn2)

While examining mold in 1929, Alexander Fleming made the most revolutionary discovery in modern medicine. He noticed bacteria would not grow near *Penicillium* and harnessed this power to create the world's first antibiotic, Penicillin.^[iii]

(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn3) For the next several decades, mankind wielded its most powerful weapon against the deadly microbes, ushering in the golden age of antibiotics.^[iv]

(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn4)
Unfortunately, the good times are coming to an end as bacteria adapts to the current tides of war. In one example, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, the infamous sexually transmitted infection known as gonorrhea, is now 98% resistant to antibiotic treatment in Asia.[v]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn5) One in four Americans with the infection can sympathize with their Asian neighbors.[vi]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn6)
Scientists attribute the widespread overuse of antibiotics to the development of these super bacteria.
[vii] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn7)

The largest consumer of antibiotics in America is the livestock industry. In fact, 80% of all antibiotics sold in the United States are fed to livestock.[viii]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn8)
Unfortunately, these antibiotics are utilized to fatten Wilbur, not to help him forget about his one night stand with Ms. Piggy.[ix]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn9)
Scientists have been urging Congress to take action to reduce antibiotic use in livestock production for years as a means for slowing antibiotic resistance.[x]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn10) The FDA has now implemented a policy aimed at limiting antibiotic use in livestock production to disease management only.[xi]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn11) FDA is asking pharmaceutical companies to change the labeling of their bottles to discourage antibiotic use for feed purposes, and is seeking to require a veterinarian's prescription before a farmer can access antibiotics.[xii]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn12) Some critics argue this is a toothless mandate since pharmaceutical participation is strictly voluntary.[xiii]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn13) But the two largest pharmaceutical companies, Zoetis and Elanco, have agreed to participate, and hopefully, most companies will follow their lead.[xiv]
(file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edn14)

While this FDA action may not be the silver bullet to stopping antibiotic overuse, it does signify an important first step. Only through collaboration and education can humanity preserve its most important chemical weapons stockpile. My turkey next year may not be as big as this year's, but that is a sacrifice I am willing to accept in this war effort. Maybe I'll just study longer hours and rely on a sleep deprived brain to trick me into believing the bird grew.

[i] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref1) FDA Takes Significant Steps to Address Antimicrobial Resistance, US Food and Drug Administration, <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/NewsEvents/CVMUpdates/ucm378166.htm>.

[ii] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref2) Sabrina Tavernise, F.D.A. Restricts Antibiotic Use For Livestock, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 11, 2013), http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/12/health/fda-to-phase-out-use-of-some-antibiotics-in-animals-raised-for-meat.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

[iii] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref3) See Fleeming-Discovert Penicillin, A Science Odyssey, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/databank/entries/dm28pc.html>.

[iv] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref4) See Antibiotic Resistance: Delaying the Inevitable, Understanding Evolution, http://evolution.berkeley.edu/evolibrary/article/medicine_03.

[v] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref5) Id.

[vi] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref6) Id.

[vii] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref7) Id.

[viii] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref8) See Letter from Public Health Organizations to Congress, (Sept. 6, 2011), available at http://www.pewhealth.org/uploads/Files/PHG/Content_Level_Pages/Issue_Briefs/Join-Letter-State-Science-Antibiotic-Use-2011-09-06.pdf.

[ix] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref9) See Tavernise, *supra* note 2.

[x] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref10) See Letter from Public Health Organizations to Congress, *supra* note 8.

[xi] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref11) FDA Takes Significant Steps to Address Antimicrobial Resistance, US Food and Drug Administration, <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/NewsEvents/CVMUpdates/ucm378166.htm>.

[xii] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref12) Id.

[xiii] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Manley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_ednref13) See Peter Lehenet, The FDA's Toothless Action on Animal Antibiotics Isn't Enough, *Los Angeles Times*, <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/dec/13/news/la-si-antibiotics-animals-fda-blowback-20131213>.

[xv] (file:///C:/Users/Jeremy/AppData/Local/Temp/Marley%20Blog%20Post%201.docx#_edref14) Jason Koehler, The FDA Has Finally Taken Steps to End Antibiotic Use in Livestock, Vice, <http://motherboard.vice.com/blog/the-fda-has-finally-taken-steps-to-end-antibiotic-use-in-livestock>.

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